RELATION
OF
The most Remarkable Proceedings at the late
ASSIZES
AT
Northampton.

Conteyning Truely and Fully,
The Tryals, Confessions, and Execution
Of a { Most *Mischievous Witch*,
Notorious High-way-man,
Barbarous Murderess.

The First being *Mary Forster*, who by witchcraft destroyed above 30 Sheep belonging to one *Joseph Weedon*, and afterwards burned to the ground his Dwelling-house, and Two Large Barns, full of Corn and Hay: To his Damage above 300*l*. With her Confession of the Fact, how, and why she did it: and asking him forgiveness for the same. And a Wonderful Experiment of her Devilish Skill shewed in the Goal, after she was Condemned.

The Second a High-way-man, who had been 14 times in Goal, and before his Death discovered several others.

The Third a Young Wench that Killed her Child, with the Strange Means how the same was Discovered, and her Penitent Behaviour at the Execution.

Who all suffered at *Northampton* aforesaid, *Saturday, Aug.* 22. 1674.

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NEWS

FROM

Northampton Assizes;

OF

Witchcraft, Robbery on the High-way, and Murther, &c.

THe Assizes being holden at the Town of Northampton, for that County, on the 18th. of August, Instant, Amongst other Criminals there brought to their several Tryals, one Mary Forster was indicted for Witchcraft, and also for Fellony, upon the statute against burning of Houses, her case after a long debate, and ful hearing of Evidence appeared to be thus.

This Woman aged somewhat above fifty years, lately lived at a place called Estoat neer Fosters-booth in Northamptonshire, being Wife to an Honest poor Man there, by profession a Transmutor, or mender of Shooes; near unto her lived one Joseph Weedon, a Farmer of good ability or repute, being generally respected and beloved as well as most in the Countrey. It hapned that last Spring this Man keeping a considerable stock of Sheep several of them were drooping, and like to dye as 'tis supposed of the rot, but being willing to make what might be of them, he caus'd them to be killed in time, and several poor people for cheapness were very glad to be his Customers for his Mutton; amongst the rest this Gammer Forster came for a Quarter of it, but would give but Twelve-pence for that which he askt Fourteen-pence for, or he would not let her have that part which she desired, so that they did not agree, but she went muttering away, being heard to say these Words. You had been better let me have it, for you shall have more Mutton shortly lye upon your hands then you know what to do with.

And accordingly the next morning he found no less than seven of the best and soundest Sheep he had lying in a miserable condition, with all their Leggs broken to pieces in several places, the next night more were served in the same manner, and the Night after that still more; so that in four or five nights space he had above thirty good Sheep thus strangely destroyed: Whereupon he was advised by some that suspected it to be done by Witch-craft, to take one of these Sheep whose

whoſe bones were ſo broken, and ſhattered whilſt it was alive, and burn, for that (according to their tradition) would make the Witch come to the place, that ſo they might know who was the Authour of the Miſchief; this is moſt certain whilſt the Sheep was burning, this Gammer Forſter (though it is not known or believed ſhe had any buſineſs there or that way) came up to the fire, and asked them what they were doing, which the remembrance of her former threatning words, confirming the Farmer in his ſuſpitions of her, he (according to another old obſervation) endeavoured to draw blood of her by ſcratching her, but finding his nails not ſharp enough for that ſervice, he in his paſſion cut her over the hand with his knife, and thereby made a ſmall wound, which for want of looking after in few days rankled, and ſhe threatned to ſue him for the damage; whereupon he agreed to give her twenty ſhillings, which ſhe had no ſooner received, but ſhe boaſted amongſt the Neighbourhood, that it was the devil in her ſhape that received it of VVeedon, and that now ſhe had thereby power to do him further miſchief, which about two days after ſhe put in Execution, one of his Barns which ſtood ſome diſtance from his Houſe, and was full of Hay, being on a ſudden ſet on fire, although there was no fire known to be near it before, but being timely diſcovered and the Neighbours called in was for the preſent quenched, but two days though it were kept watcht by ſeveral perſons, it was no body could imagine how ſet on fire again and burnt down to the ground.

Some time after this he had another greater Barn

nearer to his houſe, and full of Corn, ſet on fire ſeveral times, and put out as often, keeping above twenty perſons continually to watch it, and fearing that his houſe might be ſet on fire ſuddenly to the danger of their lives, he removed with his Family to another Houſe, and continued out of it above three weeks, during which time there was no fireing or diſturbance, ſo that he hopeing the danger paſt returned, but the fourth day afterwards this great Barn was again ſet on fire ſo furiouſly that there was no ſtopping of it, but it caught hold of the dwelling houſe too, and burnt them down to the ground, with the moſt part of his Toe, the poor Mans damage above three hundred pounds, beſides his diſappointment of an Habitation, &c.

In the mean time this VVoman being violently ſuſpected was ſeveral times examined before a Juſtice of the peace, but would at firſt confeſs nothing: however ſhe was ordered to be ſearched by a Jury of Women, who affirmed that ſhe had five ſeveral ſtrange and unuſual excreſcencies which appeared exactly like a Sows Teats, and ſeemed to be uſually ſuckt by ſomething.

Being carryed again before the Iuſtice, after a long Examination ſhe did confeſs, that ſhe fired the aforeſaid Barn, and being asked how, ſhe replyed that ſhe lighted Touchwood, and the Devil carryed her up by the Arms to the top of the Roof, and there with her Touchwood ſhe ſet fire in the Thatch, ſhe likewiſe did acknowledge that ſhe deſtroyed his Sheep, and that ſhe had ſeveral Confederates hereabouts, but refuſed to diſcover any of them. Hereupon ſhe was

commited

conveied to Northampton Goal, where Mr. VVeedon several times visited her, to whom she acknowledged the injury she had done him, that it was in revenge not only for refusing to let her have the Mutton, but for denying her another thing another time, saying he had none of it, however she desired his forgiveness, &c.

At her tryal she said little, but deny'd her being a VVitch, yet seemed to confess that she had done what she stood charged with: whereupon, and on her former confession she was condemned to be hanged, though she most desired to be burnt, alledging that if she were not, there would more prejudice happen to Mr. VVeedon, who replyed, that he pitried her condition, she must suffer as the Law had ordered, and for his own part he would put his trust in God, whom he hoped would keep him against the malice of Hell.

After Sentence a Citizen of London being there went out of curiosity to visit her as scarce believing any such thing as VVitches in nature, after much discourse he desir'd her to shew him some trick, or experiment of her skill, which at last she condiscended, bidding him get a large Bason, but be sure not wet it, he going out wets a bason on purpose, & wiping it dry again, brings it, she gets in it standing upright, & after the muttering a few unknown words, was carried several times round the room, & at last up the chimney, but being about half way up, the bason fell down, and she after it without hurt, but scolded at the Gentleman for wetting it, saying that otherwise she had got clear out of the chimny.

At the Place of Execution she would not speak a word, save onely to desire that her hands might not be Tyed, and so she wretchedly finished her life.

The

The Second that was executed, was a perſon that went by ſeveral Names, he had ſeveral Indictments againſt him, for Robing on the High-way, on which he was Convicted by evident Proof. He confeſt he had been Fourteen times in Goal, and after the Sentence upon Private Examination, 'tis ſaid he diſcovered ſeveral other High-way-men. At his Death he ſeemed very penitent, and declared that what Confeſsion he had before made in private, was true in all reſpects.

The Third was a Young VVench that being new come to a Service, one day as her Dame and ſhe were waſhing a Buck, complained very much of her being Ill, and thereupon went up into a Chamber to Lye down, where ſhe was delivered of a Baſtard Child, which ſhe pretended was ſtill Born, but however, the Law makes it Death in ſuch caſe, to go about to conceal it, which ſhe did by wraping it up in her Apron, and flinging it up over the Bedſteaſter, which was not done ſo cuningly, but that ſhe left the Apronſtrings hanging down, which her Dame afterwards coming up to ſee her, obſerving, and thinking it had been a fovvl Apron accidentally eſcaped the VVaſh, pulld it dovvn, and therein, to her great amazement, found the Murthered Infant.

This Girl ſeemed ſeriouſly to repent her of this abominable VVickedneſs, but vvhen ſhe came to the place of Execution, vvas not eaſily perſuaded to forgive one *Lolomon* that vvas appointed for the Executioner, alledging a Vovv that he had made to her, being before her fellovv Priſoner, not to do it: but at laſt ſhe vvas prevailed vvith, and did freely forgive him, and ſo ſuffered according to Sentence.

FINIS.